1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Grôs Ventre NQ13

796 fork is upright, the young men all compete, trying to raise their rafters into position in the centre fork and in a fork at the periphery, before the others. After the tree has been raised, or possibly before, the young men go out, apparently by age-companies, to cut willows to form the walls of the lodge. More recently the star-dancers and war-dancers have done this, those of each company taking the wives of the men of the other company on their horses behind them. As they go, they shoot up in the air, and when in the timber each man cuts a willow-branch. They return holding the branches and singing, ride around the lodge, and then deposit them. After the outside rafter-poles of the lodge have been tied fast in the forks, these branches are leaned in position, forming an enclosure of the lodge.

The centre fork has a buffalo-tail attached to it. A bundle of brush, called a "nest," is also fastened in the fork. A lightning symbol is made on the western side of the tree down to the ground. Inside the lodge a low screen, said to be about waist high, is erected at the western end, opposite the entrance. Behind this is the pledger of the dance. In front of the screen is a painted buffalo-skull. Two sticks of cherry-wood, one red and one black, stand on each side of the skull. A wheel or ceremonial hoop made of a stick bent in a circle, wrapped with skin, and with feathers attached, is hung on one of these sticks. Just as clothing is hung at the ends of the horizontal rafters of the lodge, or possibly on the centre fork itself, as an offering to the sun, objects are said to be hung on this brush screen at the western end of the lodge.

[796] Apparently the general course of the main portion of the dance, which follows the erection of the lodge, is similar to that of the Arapaho sun-dance, though there are certain features entirely without parallel among the Arapaho. The pledger and the other dancers neither eat nor drink during the ceremony. Women join in the fasting, but do not dance. The dancers stand whistling, and looking up at the "nest" in the tree.

796 The self-torture characterizing the sun-dance among most tribes is found
364 with the Gros Ventre in its usual form. Four knotted thongs hang from the
785 centre fork. Two sticks are passed under the skin of the dancers' breasts, one on each side, to which the thongs are fastened. The dancers try to tear the sticks out of their skin. Some whose skin is tough do not succeed. In that case a medicine-man comes to them and makes them unconscious of pain, so that they break loose easily. When they have fallen, he restores them to consciousness. One after the other, the dancers go through this ordeal. While the dancers are thus tied to the tree, they move back and forth, apparently dancing. This is called niina^{n}tsôia^{n}. Some dancers also fasten shields in a similar way to the skin of their back, and pull these out. Others are attached by the breast to a post located outside of the dancing-

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

lodge. Other men go up into the hills near the camp, where they are fastened to a post, and fast from sunrise to sunset. In the evening their ceremonial "grandfather" comes and cuts them loose. Young men who want to meet with success in war pierce the skin over their shoulder-blade, and, having inserted sticks, hang two guns to these on each side. Sometimes a crooked-hoofed horse is fastened to the sticks. Thereupon they go about outside of the camp-circle, crying constantly, hoping that some supernatural being will pity them. Still others tie four or five buffalo-skulls in a row, which they fasten in the same way to their backs. They also go around the camp-circle.

If it is thought possible that the enemy may be near at the time of the dance, a man brings a filled pipe to the pledger of the dance and offers it to him, asking about the enemy. The pledger takes out his medicine-bag, which is the skin of the animal he saw in his vision, incenses it, and performs the acts which this guardian animal commanded. Every one is quiet, and the fire is put out so that the lodge is completely dark. The pledger blows his whistle, and the people sing for him as loudly as they can. He makes motions around his head with his medicine, thereby asking his guardian spirit to enable him to see supernaturally. He continues his motions until he is able to see the enemy. Thereupon he sits down. After this, another man offers him a pipe, saying, "We wish you to tell us what you have seen. Therefore take this pipe and smoke it." After he has smoked, the pledger tells the people how many people he has seen, and where they are. He says, "I saw so many buffalo-bulls (men). They are coming from there. Take charcoal for successful battle" (black being the paint of victory).

The dancers also have the power to see the enemy. If, as they look at the "nest" day and night, they see legs hanging down, or a headless body in the tree, it is the sign that an enemy will be killed by the tribe. If, on the other hand, they see blood on the poles overhead or running down the central tree, a member of the tribe will be killed. Sometimes they see a man whom they can recognize as a member of the tribe, black as coal and very thin, hanging from the poles above them. Then he will die soon.

Each day certain men, who seem to be young men, are selected, and their names called out. These men dress as if for war. When they enter, it seems that they sit in a row at the left of the entrance. The bravest of them are then selected, and taken to the back of the lodge, where a bed and head-rest have been prepared, on which they sit. One of these men counts a coup, and picking up a stick puts it into the fire. One after another they do this until a large fire is blazing. These men are called tsöötaxwuhuu ("inside dancers"). Thereupon two old men, going to the centre of the lodge and conferring in whispers, select six or eight warriors. As soon as these

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

793 natural world and as beneficent helpers of their people, and the lofty ethical behavior and magnanimity demanded by the Gros Ventres' code in individuals of prominence in secular as well as in sacred activities, the Flat Pipe keeper and co-keeper were expected in general to live lives strictly conformed to the Gros
793 Ventre ethical code and in particular to be generous and to repress
431 aggressive impulses. The people would ordinarily be generous to them. For instance, after a successful buffalo hunt the killer or killers would share the spoils with them. But they themselves were under special obligations of generosity. If, for example, a person came to the keeper's lodge and, observing the rule above mentioned of going all the way inside, asked the keeper for something, the latter had to comply with the request and could not refuse it, and in actuality hardly ever refused. If the keeper lacked what was requested, he had to give the petitioner something else, for the latter would not be sent away empty-handed. This custom did not, it seems, lead to abuse and the keeper was not imposed upon. The keeper and his wife were required to be especially generous in providing feasts from time to time and in giving food to callers. Whenever any one came to the keeper's lodge to make an offering to the Pipe, the donor was fed.

793 When a man became keeper all grudges held by or toward him
785 and the co-keeper were wiped away. They could no longer make their enemies the target of abuse or revenge, and vice versa.

As mentioned above, to command respect they could use the powers previously described, although at the risk of ensuing penalties. But for the rest, they were strictly forbidden to lose their tempers with, or show anger toward, anyone and particularly to strike anyone. If they wished evil on anyone, the evil would come to pass. If in a fit of anger they forgot themselves and hit or whipped a person, or even a dog or horse, the victim would be paralyzed. Nor could they talk badly about people.

The keepership imposed many major and minor hardships, austerities, privations and inconveniences upon the keeper and co-keeper. These had not, so far as we can judge, an ascetic purpose proper, that is, spiritual or moral self-control and achievement through self-denial. They did however serve, not only to set apart the keeper and co-keeper from the rest of the tribe but

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

also to enhance their sacredness and intercessory role as well as their prestige in the eyes of the people. Gros Ventre character-ideals have a high rating to "strong-heartedness," ability to bear and forego, readiness to do without, "asceticism" in its looser sense of voluntary self-punishment. Making one's self "pitiful" through hardships and privations in order to excite the sympathy of and to obtain blessings from the supernatural beings was a basic procedure in Gros Ventre religious practice. The keeper and co-keeper were expected to be sacred and powerful intercessors and to be individuals of high character.

In general the keeper and co-keeper had to lead very restricted lives, largely cut off from free association with their tribesmen, most of the time kept within or close to their lodge where the Pipe hung, and occupied with their official duties.

In particular they were under many specific privations and prohibitions. Perhaps the most severe of these was the obligation of sending away and thus practically giving up all their children, even their favorite one, except the one chosen as Pipe child. And ordinarily Gros Ventre parents were extremely fond of and attached to their children.

The keeper and co-keeper could not eat birds or bird eggs of any kind, nor any part of the head, such as the tongue or brains, of any quadruped. According to one tradition they could eat the body but not the head of dogs; according to another, not even the body. On the occasion however of feasts connected with the Flat Pipe they could eat buffalo tongue. They apparently did not eat fish, but the eating of fish was uncommon anyhow among the Gros Ventres and some Gros Ventres did not eat it at all. There were other minor food taboos, according to The Boy, but he could not recall what they were.

The co-keeper was obliged to wear a robe or blanket all the time, no small inconvenience during the Montana summer when the temperature not infrequently rises to the 90's Fahrenheit in the shade around midday and the afternoon. The prohibition against the wearing of metal personal adornments by the keeper and co-keeper was previously noted.

The keeper and co-keeper were not allowed to comb their hair, nor to scratch their heads except with a scratching-stick. The

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

keeper (and probably the co-keeper too) could not cut his hair, but had to wear it tangled and disheveled.

The keeper and co-keeper were not permitted to bathe and swim in the creeks,—this in contrast to the Gros Ventre custom of daily early morning bathing and swimming by both sexes the year round when not prevented by ice, as a cleansing, body-hardening and recreative practice. In fact, the two were not allowed to wash even their hands and face with water, but, according to The Boy, had to use instead fat, grease or oil, and to wipe them with the same muskrat skin they used in face painting.

The keeper could not draw blood on his own person by cutting, as was done by others in the sweat lodge rite, in mourning, and on other occasions.

The keeper and co-keeper were not supposed to cry or to cut their hair in case of the death of a relative, nor to go where any one lay dead, nor to have anything at all to do with a corpse. In particular they were not allowed to give clothes, at least their own, to put on a dead person. It was a breach of this last prohibition, in fact, that resulted in Lame Bull's lameness, and his subsequent sobriquet, Lame Bull, his proper name being Under Bull.[4]

The keeper and co-keeper could not gamble or be gambled with. If the keeper nevertheless did so and won, he won not only the wager, but also the life of his opponent. The latter would meet with some fatality unless the keeper agreed to avert the evil by performing the proper rite over him. The keeper would direct the man to build a sweat-lodge and would enter it with him. The man would fumigate himself and inhale the smudge. The keeper would rub the man all over from head to feet with sage.

The keeper was not allowed just to throw off his saddle or blankets onto the ground but had to take good care of them.

According to Coming Daylight, a keeper during his term of office "could not sing the songs he was supposed to sing," but we secured no clarification of this statement. The reference may be to songs previously gotten in quests for supernatural power.

In addition to the foregoing more or less restrictive or "ascetic" observances that served to set the keeper and co-keeper apart from

[4] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 201.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

According to Al Chandler, the Pipe bundle was not brought into the sweat-lodge. According, however, to Garter Snake, it was so brought, unwrapped, when a vow to make a sweat-lodge for the Pipe was being fulfilled. 796*

During the sweating the keeper whipped himself with his buffalo-tail whip; the others, with whips of horse or other hair. [785]

At some time during the sweating rite, presumably when the ordinary pipe was smoked, the Supreme Being was prayed to to grant the petitions of the people. Prayers might also be made to Bha'a for rain, change of weather, and so forth. The Feathered Pipe keeper however, according to Garter Snake, "prayed to nothing on earth, and all prayers and offerings were made [ultimately at least] to the Supreme Being. . . . In prayers [where both appealed to] the Supreme Being came first, and Bha'a came after him."

After the sweating rite was over, the offerings were taken down off the pole and disposed of as in the case of the Flat Pipe offerings.

Where a large crowd was expected to attend, the singing and associated ceremonies might take place, not in the keeper's lodge, but in a double lodge, facing east, like that used in the Flat Pipe transfer rite.

Smudging in Feathered Pipe ceremonies[9] conformed to the ritual number four. The keeper, or if he was busy, the co-keeper, held a bit of dried sweet pine needles, "first straight up for God, then to the left, then to the right, then down to the hearth," and put the needles right on the live buffalo chip, all but a very small pinch of the needles which he then put on the top of his head. To smudge her person, Garter Snake, when she was Pipe child, would be given a bit of pine needles to chew; then she would hold her hands over the smudge ascending from the hearth, rub her left palm up her right arm, then her right palm up her left arm, then both palms from the top of her head down the sides of her

[9] Plate 3 A shows a round hearth used for smudging in the 1951 rite. Dr. Hagener under date of Aug. 8, 1954, writes: "I do remember that at least two colors were present in it and also that the fire was built on top of it. The fire was strictly a ceremonial one made with just a few sticks. Iron Man and his wife washed their hands in the smoke of it before opening the bundle." [R.F.]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

be on the night immediately preceding the beginning of the Dance rite proper.

Usually others besides the principal vower would vow to join the dance and to pierce their breasts with skewers. These associate vowers would also choose each his own grandfather and, with the help of his own crier, have the same formal public announcement made of his vow as in the case of the principal vower.

As proximate preparation for the Dance, if the bands were scattered at the time, the principal vower would send out young men as runners to summon the bands to foregather for the dance. Attendance was obligatory for all.

The principal vower set up his lodge in the center of the camp circle, and here headquarters were established where conferences of the vower and his assistants were held and whence pro tem laws and regulations, decisions, when and whether to move camp, and so forth, were issued.

The vower's chief assistants in these matters were his own age-group or company, a component sub-group of either the Wolves or the Stars. Whether all the Wolves or Stars respectively, and not merely the vower's own age-group, were divided into "talls" and "shorts" (see below), and served as soldiers or "police" during the dance, to enforce attendance, order in the buffalo hunt and so forth, is a point we could not clear up, but more probably only the members of his own age-group.

For either the vower's age-group, or perhaps, as just noted, all the Stars or Wolves respectively of which his age-group was a component sub-group, four head officers or "generals" or "lieutenants" were chosen, and also two subordinate officers or "servants" or attendants. The two tallest of the four head officers took the taller men of the age-group (or of the larger society, Stars or Wolves) as their soldiers, and one of the two subordinate officers; the two shortest, the shorter men, and the other subordinate officer. The two divisions, the "talls" and the "shorts," constituted the "soldiers" or "police" for the dance. Each division also had an outstanding old man as herald or crier.

After the people had all been gathered together, the first task was that of gathering food supplies, buffalo meat and particularly

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

*796 them and these offerings "hung thick up there." The offerings were made to the Supreme Being to ask long life and happiness.

After the lodge was up, all who were to "join" the Sacrifice Dance went inside. Dancing continued for the three (or two?) succeeding nights, we were informed, but we obtained no further details on the ritual followed during this preparatory interim period, except as regards fasting. Those at least who were to go through self-torture on the fourth day and apparently some of the other active participants had to observe a strict fast from food and drink during this four-day period as well as to abstain from sexual intercourse. Those so submitting themselves to this regime would be further tested out by singers. Songs might be sung, for instance, about water, with words such as, "all the rivers and creeks have run dry," or about love and women, all just to put the young men to the test. People who were not fasting would conspicuously display and eat food right under the eyes of the faster. One or other of the young men might weaken under these temptations and "sneak out and give up." If he did so the people would banter him: "You are no man. You can't stand it," and his father or uncle would "give him the dickens about it."

785 (785 834)

785 *796 Back of the fasting and sex abstinence as well as of the self-torture was a concept that was a basic theme of Gros Ventre religious culture in general, and that one of our informants, Al Chandler, expressed as follows: "The sacrifice [fasting, sex abstinence, self-torture] those men [of the Sacrifice Dance] made was like penance because they thought you could not get anything unless you punished yourself, for God was not going to give you anything if you went out there laughing and full of good food. He won't help you that way." Making one's self "pitiful" when seeking power of or answer to prayer is a part of this concept or closely related to it.

*796 During the whole Sacrifice Dance the vowers were supposed to keep their minds on their praying, to concentrate their thoughts —another basic Gros Ventre religious theme—and the "tempting" behavior of those around them was seemingly a test of the vower's power of concentration, his ability to insulate himself mentally against external distractions.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

The rite of self-torture, carried out on the day after the third (or second)[12] night of singing was the dramatic climax of the Sacrifice Dance. Either during the three-day singing and dancing or, more probably, on the morning of the day of torture occurred the painting and decorating of the dancers, those who had vowed to undergo self-torture.[13] By their respective grandfathers or others substituting as sort of "secondary grandfathers," each dancer was first painted over his entire body with white clay. On his upper chest, near the neck, was painted in black with charcoal or paint the figure of a bird (evidently representing Bha'a, the Thunder Bird), and a black zigzag line ending in a fork from each of the bird's wings across the chest and down either arm of the dancer to the forearm, and a similar black zigzag fork-ended line from each of the bird's feet down either leg and thigh to the ankle. Another black zigzag line, forked at both ends, was painted across the dancer's forehead, and under each eye, a vertical zigzag line, ending at the bottom in a fork, but painted in red, not in black. Sprigs of sage-brush were put on as wristlets and anklets, and around the head "so that they met over the eyes." "Common dancers" and other active participants such as the ceremonial grandfathers were painted all over with red paint instead of white clay, and were apparently decorated with over-painted designs similar to those of the self-torturers, the "dancers" proper.

The self-torture rite, on the last day of the Sacrifice Dance, began with the skin-piercing, the insertion of the skewers, and the attachment of the thongs and shield. The skin-piercing was done by the respective grandfathers to whom the respective vowers, their grandchildren, gave generous presents of horses, robes and

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[12] Our informants agreed that the Sacrifice Dance lasted through four nights, but whether the night of singing just before the "scouting" for the center pole counted as one of these four or not, and hence whether the skin piercing took place on the second or third day after the "scouting" was not made fully clear to us,—more probably the third day.

[13] In 1948 The Boy stated that the dancers were painted with white clay and their faces painted differently each morning. "On the first day each dancer has a red dot on each cheek, the second day two dots, the third day, three,—these are their tears and indicated that the dancers are crying." [R.F.]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

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so forth for this service.[14] The one who originally vowed to put on the Dance was not pierced.

A best robe or blanket was spread on the ground and the vower lay down on it. Three skewers in all were inserted, one on either side of the chest, and a third in the back at the left shoulderblade. The skewers were smooth wooden sticks "about as thick as a man's little finger," of flattish oval section, and "about as long as a cigarette" (ca. 3 in.). To insert the skewer, first an awl was plunged into and under the skin (apparently vertically), and with the awl the skin was raised up. Then with a knife the grandfather cut two holes in the raised skin, one on either side of the awl, at right angles thereto. The skewer was at once inserted, and then the awl was taken out. Thus for the insertion of each of the three skewers, three incisions were made, one with the awl and two with the knife. During this piercing and skewer insertion, song No. 48 was sung, a song sung only at this time.

After the skewers had been inserted, the vower stood up. To each of the skewers in his chest was securely attached one end of a stout buckskin thong, the other end of which was tied to the center pole. On the body end of the thong had been sewn a piece of buckskin with a short longitudinal slash in it, and the sides of the slash were looped under the projecting ends of the skewer (between the ends and the skin). To the skewer in the vower's back a shield was firmly fastened.

After this, each vower's grandfather would then put one hand on his grandson's chest and with the other would give the two thongs a hard pull and would jerk the thongs and push his "grandson" around,—this "to deaden his nerves," to kind of deaden the hurt and wound, and "to give him a sample of what was coming." Now the vowers were ready to "dance."

The vowers "danced," only one at a time. As each vower finished his "dance," he did not leave the scene, but waited until all had finished. While the vowers "danced" the old women sat around in

[14] In 1948 The Boy emphasized that while the grandchildren paid the grandfather handsomely for his services during the Sacred Dance, the grandfather on the other hand "nursed his children" by feeding them well during the preliminary steps of instruction. [R.F.]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

a circle and sang a wordless song, while "other men and women danced up and down in one place behind the old women singers." 785 796*

The vower would start his "dance" by reaching back and tearing off his shield, and in doing so, of course tearing the skin over the skewer in his back. Then with the bone whistle he carried round his neck he blew "a rapid whistle," "a sort of trill," "as if he were blowing on a flute,"—this as a sign he was ready to go through the rest of the ordeal. Then while the singers "sang hard for him," he danced with both feet, pumped up and down, and swung around, pulling and jerking and backing on the taut thongs attached to the center pole in order to tear the skewered flesh of his chest and to free himself. Sometimes the flesh would not break, or the flesh on one side of his chest would while that on the other would not. When the ordeal would go on very long, and the suffering would be extreme, and the dancer might be exhausting himself, some one of the onlookers might have pity on him and say to a bystander: "You go and tear him loose." He would then go and push and throw the "dancer" hard so the skin would break off. The Boy and Thick knew one case where the skin on one side of the "dancer's" chest would not break off even by such pushing and throwing; so they had to cut it with a knife. People thought that the darker a man's skin was the tougher it was and this last man had very dark skin. "Sometimes the dancer's skin was so tough it would stretch way out like a shirt." When a "dancer's" skin would finally break under the pulling and backing he would just fall over to the ground and the thong would spring back round the pole. Then he would be taken back and laid down and the loose skin would be trimmed off. These trimmed off pieces of skin would be gotten together by the ritual grandfathers who would take them to the buffalo skull (at the base of the center pole), hold them up, and then lay them on top of the skull, "as an offering of the very body itself." [534]

"Some 'dancers' did not have much nerve and would wince and flinch. Some didn't bat an eye." At one dance, Coming Daylight told us, one young man after the thongs were attached and pulled "just burst out crying, it was so painful. After that he went to the center pole and put his arms around it and cried there. I [152]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

785 *796 [152] couldn't stand it. I ran home to my grandmother and cried too because I pitied that young man." On another occasion, Thick too, then a young boy, "cried from the pitiful scene," as he expressed it. "Big Thunder," according to Coming Daylight, "had very long thick hair. When he was dancing around the pole in the Sacrifice Dance his hair swept the ground. It looked just awful. I screamed and ran home." From what was told The Boy by his brother who underwent this self-torture once in the Sacrifice Dance and twice alone on a knoll (see details of latter rite, pp. 393-398), "The beginning was hardest; as you went along, you got sort of numbed and the pain was not so bad." His brother had felt very acute pain at the trimming of the lacerated flesh. That night the pain was so intense that he could not sleep: "it was as if two red hot coals were there."

According to Al Chandler the Gros Ventres considered their Sacrifice Dance a much more severe ordeal in the way of self-torture and fasting than were the Sun Dances of neighboring tribes and to this severity they attributed the early abandonment of the rite.

After all the "dancers" had in turn gone through their self-torture, they left the scene together, and were through with their participation in the Sacrifice Dance and could break their fast. But, through the succeeding fourth night, some of the other participants (which ones we could not discover) continued their fast, and the others danced and sang.

*796 Certain important features of the Sacrifice Dance have not been mentioned so far, as we could not learn just where they fitted into the ritual sequence. We shall describe them now.

The Boy was quite positive that a sweat-lodge rite was held in connection with the Sacrifice Dance, on the fourth night of singing and just prior to the beginning of the Dance proper. In all likelihood the rite followed in general pattern that of the Sacred Pipe sweat-lodge. Sweet grass was the proper ritual material smudge throughout the Sacrifice Dance including this preliminary sweating.

787 *796 Some of the participants in the Sacrifice Dance,—"not necessarily the one or ones who had made vows, but dancers trying their

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

singed off at a fire, and the insides taken out without skinning the animal; then it was quartered up and boiled.

In addition, Charles Buckman stated: "If a party went out to war and met the enemy, before the actual fighting began a man might promise to give grub and a feast to old people, and as part of the feast there had to be a dog,—a pup, of any color. After the party got back home [at the feast, before eating] four pieces of the dog meat were taken and held up and then set on [in] the ground, one each to the north, east, south and west. The pieces were held up as offered to God—in thanksgiving and as a prayer for future favors. Then the young man served the grub to the old people. Before eating they would say, 'O God, this young man has fulfilled the promise he made to you,' and they would pray for him."

What we may call, for want of a better name, sacrifices of person or somatic sacrifices, took three main forms: offerings of flesh, of finger joints, and of self-inflicted suffering and/or privation. Each of the first two is a sacrifice in the strict sense of the term; the third, in the broader sense. The gashing of arms, legs or face as a mourning custom was quite distinct in the Gros Ventre mind from the above flesh offering: it expressed sorrow, it was not in any sense a sacrifice or offering to the deceased. No sacrifices at all were connected with mourning. Nor were finger joints ever cut off as a mourning observance.[9]

In most instances recorded by us, these somatic sacrifices were made in fulfillment of vows for the cure or safety of a close relative of the vower,—as, it may be recalled, was the case with self-torturers in the Sacrifice Dance. There were exceptions however: in their respective quests for power, Bull Lodge cut off a finger joint, and Little Man, Al Chandler's adopted father, cut off bits of flesh; the other Little Man, Coming Daylight's husband, when suffering from hemorrhages and pains around the heart was told in dream that he would get well if he underwent solitary self-torture.

Women as well as men would make offerings of their flesh and finger joints. To judge from the records we obtained, the finger joint sacrifice was more frequently made by women than by men,

[9] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 205.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

782 785 304 the flesh sacrifice with about equal frequency by the two sexes. Ordinarily only a little of the woman's flesh was cut, small bits, as against the large bits or strips not infrequently cut from the man. Only men underwent solitary self-torture out in the hills.

With these generalizations on somatic sacrifices covered, we shall now take up specific features of the flesh, finger and self-torture sacrifices in order.

In the early archaic times Ni:hohat, as we have seen, gave detailed instructions on cutting off bits of flesh when explaining about the Flat Pipe sweat-lodge.

The rite was described by The Boy (Thick present and concurring) and, with some differences, by Singer, as follows:

The Boy (and Thick). "The cutting off of bits of flesh was a rite all to itself. A round hole was made in the ground for the heated rocks; a common sweat-lodge was erected; a mound was made of the dirt excavated to make the hole; a buffalo skull was put on the mound; and a pole was put up for offerings. . . . The one to be cut would get as an operator someone who had gone through the rite himself. . . . The cut off flesh was offered to the Supreme Being. . . . Usually the rite was undergone so that some sick person who was near and dear to the undergoer would get well. . . . The skin was not pierced but a piece of green branch was split in two, and the two pieces were pressed hard, parallel and not quite touching each other, on the skin making it rise up, and these raised strips were then cut off. . . . One of my grandfathers was all cut up, with two half circles on his chest, one half circle on the outer side of each shoulder, a double row of cuts—not little bits, but strips cut right down—on both his upper arms and forearms and legs from hip to ankle. All these cuts were made on a single occasion. It was thought he would die of this sacrifice but he did not. . . . I myself had four bits of flesh cut from my arm, and others [farther] up my arm. [He here bared his arm and showed the scars: they were not crescent shaped.] The first cutting was done when I was a child. I was told to look away when it was being done. Sometimes children would run away and hide when told it was to be done to them. . . . Only three or four years ago [this would be about 1935-36] an old man so cut off

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

a young man's skin back of Thomas Main's house." (The cut off pieces of skin were, as at the Sacrifice Lodge, placed on the buffalo skull, "as an offering of the [person's] very body.")

Singer. "For cutting offerings of flesh from the arms they usually tried to get the same doctor who cut off my finger joint (see infra). He would take the flesh, put a needle through it and cut the flesh off. . . . He would then put the cut-off flesh in one of the bags from around the buffalo or cow heart which were used to carry water, and would hang it up or bury it. Women could not do the flesh cutting for themselves; they had to have a man doctor to do it. You promise so to torture yourself for some reason such as the wish to save the life of your sister or brother or other relative. For instance, if some young fellows were going off on a war party, the sisters would get out and make some such promise as: 'I will give part of my flesh or my finger if my brother comes back a great warrior.' It was great to have somebody [some relative] come back a hero, a brave man, or, as they called it, a big chief. . . . A wife could do this for her husband but usually it was a sister who thought that much of her brother. . . .

"I have a scar on my left upper arm [which she showed]. I had made this promise for the recovery of one of my daughters who was ill. A sick person is doctored, but such a promise is made as a last resort. Lame Bull told me they were going to make a big cut, like the ones they made on men. The cutting was done in a sweat-lodge where they all sat and prayed. They blackened the spot on my arm with charcoal,[10] then clipped the flesh off and held it up to the sun and said: 'This is what we offered you.' He cut me in four places on each arm. My husband was mad because it was too much. The one place on my left arm where the scar is was cut deeper than the others. After I made that promise I had the cutting done right away. [Mary Ereaux, our interpreter, here interrupted: "Goodness, you might just as well have done like the Sacrifice Dancers. You tortured yourself just as badly."] I held myself in but they certainly hurt me. They did not put anything on the wounds, only the charcoal beforehand. People try to

[10] Blackening sacrifices was a common (perhaps *the* regular) Gros Ventre procedure.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

782
785 take anything like that very patiently" ["Like our Lord being
304 crucified," Mary Ereaux commented].

Very much the same procedure as regards the sweat-lodge, buffalo skull and so forth was ordinarily followed when a finger joint was amputated. The cut-off joint was offered commonly to the sun, or to the Supreme Being. The operation regularly took place inside a sweat-lodge. "A joint from any finger could be offered up, but usually it was the first joint of the little finger of the left hand. The offerer would put his or her finger on a log or stone; the operator, someone skilled in the matter, would then place a knife on the joint and hit the knife with something heavy. [752] Sage was put on the wound, to stanch the flow of blood and help healing. Children in their play, it may be added, would in make-believe cut off little fingers, apply sage and so forth.

The finger amputation complex may be illustrated by Singer's experience:

"My infant daughter [one of her three children by Iron Bucket] had been ill. I sacrificed [in a delayed fulfillment of her vow] the end joint of the little finger of my left hand. . . . I said: 'I give you this. This is what I sacrifice to save my child's life.' This I said to the sun which is God's work, His property like. . . . I held the baby and my husband prayed: 'Sun, she has given you her finger so our child's life will be saved.' . . .

"The rite was private, not a big ceremony. We went out of the lodge and the sun was about half way up and he [apparently the operator] held up my whole left hand and said: 'Now, Passing or Traveling Man, this is what she is going to give you.' There was just one old man who cut off fingers. They claimed he had [this power from] a dream. . . . He was the father of Dwarf; Dwarf died just recently.

"They had me lie face down and the others held me so I would not move: The old man [Dwarf's father] . . . told me to relax, . . . felt around, found the joint, put my finger over the lodge pole and chopped it [the end joint only] off. I did not see it but I heard when he hit the lodge pole. But there was no pain. Then they let me sit up.

"The old man said: 'Do you want it to bleed, or shall I close

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

it up right away?' My husband said, 'Let it bleed,' because he was afraid it would be sore if it didn't bleed. So when the old man thought it had bled enough, he chewed some big-leaf sage, made a poultice, and put it on my finger (and/or "sprinkled powdered root on my finger," she added later). It healed quickly and never troubled me. . . . We had to give the old man something for doing that. . . . My daughter lived to be a young woman."

Self-torture out on the hills,—"sacrifice alone on hills," as it was called,—had much in common with self-torture at the Sacrifice Dance. The chief difference was that, unlike the Sacrifice Dance torture rite, it was done in solitude. The self-torturer had to have a ritual grandfather, a man who himself had previously undergone this solitary self-torture—this in contrast to flesh and finger cutting in which there were no ritual grandfathers. The "grandfather-grandson" relationship so contracted persisted after the rite was over. Coming Daylight and The Boy were in agreement that the solitary self-torture was a more severe ordeal than self-torture at the Sacrifice Dance.

Those mentioned by our informants as having gone through "sacrifice alone on the hills" were: Stiffarm; Running Crow (Stiffarm as his "grandfather" for this rite); Coming Daylight's husband Little Man (Running Crow as his "grandfather"); her cousin White Skunk, son of Crow Bull; The Boy's brother; Jim Shortman; and perhaps Sits-in-the-Middle. On Stiffarm's, Running Crow's, and Sits-in-the-Middle's experience we obtained no details; on White Skunk's, no details beyond the fact that he underwent it "because my [Coming Daylight's] son was sick at the mission school: that son died anyway," and that he did "right on this hill here [at Hays]." The detailed accounts of Little Man's experience as narrated by Coming Daylight, of The Boy's brother's as narrated by The Boy, and of Jim Shortman's as narrated by himself, to be given now, will help to fill out the generalized picture of the rite in the preceding paragraph.

Coming Daylight's account of Little Man's "sacrifice alone on the hills," given in separate fragments on four different days, is here presented just as she gave it.

"My husband Little Man [Deafie] went out to the hills. When

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

anyone so goes to be tortured someone else goes along. It was awful when they so went to pray and cry and sacrifice themselves. Running Crow went with Little Man, as the latter's grandfather, to pierce his breast and insert the skewers whereby he was attached to the pole by a thong. [After that was done] Running Crow gave Little Man a push and Little Man danced round and round the pole. Running Crow and Stiffarm, who went out with him [just as helper, not as grandfather], left Little Man, as was customary, alone. Then sometime during the day the two returned and gave Little Man a smoke, but the latter did not eat or drink anything. He would be hungry and thirsty and would run around without even moccasins on his feet. It is an awful sacrifice. He would dance until the skewer pulled out of his flesh. Then he would be tired and would sleep and dream.

"Little Man went through this rite on account of a dream. He had been sick [heart pains and hemorrhages] and had dreamed he was going through the rite, and in consequence did later actually carry it out. He carried it out at Chinook where we were all living at the time. During the rite his mother sang war songs in her camp.

"Little Man had not tortured himself in any big celebration [Sacrifice Dance]. He did this only alone on the hills. It is hardest this latter way. It takes longer to break off [for the skewer to tear through the flesh] in the heat [sic]. It is awfully hot out in the hills and the self-torturer goes barefoot, without moccasins. He dances west to east, counter clockwise, from sun up to sun down. It is not so hot in the lodge at the big celebrations [Sacrifice Dances]. It is a greater thing to do it alone.

"The time my husband, Little Man, did this I too was away on the hills. I pitied my old man [husband] and did not eat. I came home in the evening to cook for him. We always help a relative when he fasts like that. My husband's mother and sister were at home together with another woman relative, Ed Blackbird's wife."

After Little Man's self-torture was over, he was told in a dream the exact kind of leaf (or root) to use for curing his hemorrhages and just where it was to be found, Coming Daylight was able to find it, and Little Man was cured.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

782
785
304

The Boy's narrative of his older brother's experience gives insight into the brother's feelings during the ordeal as well as detailed information on the rite itself. His brother had undergone self-torture once at a Sacrifice Dance and twice alone on a hill. The occasion of one of the two solitary rites was the following. Lame Bull had adopted a young boy who grew up as one of the family and proved himself worthy. The adopted boy and The Boy's older brother, both now dead, were sort of favorite sons of Lame Bull. The adopted son suddenly became mentally unbalanced. It was for his cure that The Boy's older brother vowed solitary self-torture. After the fulfillment of the vow the adopted son recovered.

The older brother, before the solitary rite, gave a pipe to a man to pray with and to announce out loud the coming rite and the name of the "grandfather" selected. At the end of the prayer the announcer released the pipe to the ritual grandfather who then took charge of the rite, piercing the vower and later cutting him loose.

The skewer punctures were made by first plunging a big awl into the skin on the side of the chest, the vower lying on his back. Then with the awl the skin was raised up, and a knife plunged point first right through the skin at right angles to the awl,—making in all three perforations of the skin, one by the awl and two by the knife point. Then the knife was withdrawn, the stick or skewer was pushed through at once while the holes were fresh, and finally the awl was withdrawn. One end, slashed, of a buckskin thong was put over the two projecting ends of the skewer, and the other end attached to the top of the pole anchored on the hill or knoll.

With the thongs so attached to the pole and the skewers [in the vower's chest, right and left side], the vower walked and ran, from sunrise to sunset, clockwise, starting at the south and ending there, then counter-clockwise, all through the day. He would go around so often that he would make a trail there.

The brother's feelings, as described by him to The Boy, are here given in The Boy's words:

"Out on the hill was the most severe [as compared with the Sacrifice Dance] for the reason that he had to do it all alone. From time to time he would rest, exhausted and crying. [When going]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

782 785 304

he would stretch himself good and tight [the thongs taut, his body weight pulling on them]. When he rested and wanted to relax and let the thongs go slack, the pain was worse than when they were taut. The skin over the skewer would dry up (and would work toward the living skin). . . . At sundown my brother's 'grandfather' came to him, and the toughest part of all occurred. My brother had not during the day tried to break loose [by body pull to make the skewer sever the skin], as at the Sacrifice Dance, for his 'grandfather' was to cut his skin loose. My brother all but died when he was cut loose. It was as if his heart was being cut. And at night, after both the Sacrifice Dance and the solitary ordeal, the pain was so intense, as if there were two red hot coals there [where the flesh was cut], that he could not sleep."

Jim Shortman (died 1948), probably the last Gros Ventre living who had gone through the solitary self-torture rite, gave the following account of his experience:

"The sticks [skewers for thongs] were about three inches long. (Here Jim undid his shirt to show the scars which were still visible on his chest.) My helper [ritual grandfather] was Running Crow. He was the man who fixed me up, pierced my flesh and fastened the thongs. My self-torture alone took place on a hill way out.

"My first struggle and ordeal in all that I was to do was to follow a command by Running Crow for me to go to the stream and break off a quaking aspen tree, but not to cut it with knife or axe,—to break it off in some way and bring to where I was going to do the fasting. So I went and twisted and worked and wore the ground just smooth around the tree with my efforts, and finally I got it down and twisted it off. I put a rope around it and dragged it to the scene of the fasting, and I had to accomplish this before sun-up of that day.

"So Running Crow went with me on my way to the scene of the fasting, which was a little west of where I and Paul Shortman now live. Just to the right of it is a little ridge. That is where I did it. The reason I vowed to do this was because my mother was at the point of death. She was very sick and I carried out my vow and she got well

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

"Paddy Skinner came along to help Running Crow dig a hole and fix in it the pole I had twisted off and tamp it in the ground securely. After they put up that pole or tree, Running Crow tied all of my offerings up there on top and also fastened the rope that was to be secured to the sticks in my chest.

"After this tree was made secure in the ground, Running Crow told me to take my clothes off, which I did, and he made a paste of white clay and painted my body with it. So these two men told me to lie down on my back and face my head towards the rising sun. Then they took a knife, and a big needle in the other hand, and lifted the skin on my upper arm and cut off seven pieces of my skin. Then they did that to my other arm. This made fourteen pieces in all. They put these pieces they had cut off at the foot of this tree. Then they cut off seven more pieces on the outside of each of my thighs, and by that time it began to hurt.

"Then last they cut my chest, the right side first. They pierced me there with the blade of a pocket knife and pushed the stick [skewer] in as soon as he released the blade. Then they repeated this on my left side. They told me to stand up so they fastened the thongs onto these sticks. Running Crow did that.

"Then after these things were securely fastened, Running Crow put the palm of his hand on my chest and pushed me four times to make the ropes tight. He stepped to my right side and pushed me four times too, and at the same time he told me: 'Now you begin your fasting and your actual performance of your vow and you must begin by crying.' And I did all that. And Running Crow told me: 'Go around this pole, round and round clockwise, and when you get tired you can lie down or sit down anyway you find restful, but always keep the ropes tight and do not loosen them, much less take them off.'

"Finally I got tired and I thought I would lie down and rest, and I did lie down but I did not rest well. In fact it seemed to be worse. Even the wind making the thongs sway hurt me. I had started out without eating or drinking anything. I was fasting. I had a terrible ordeal, to say the least, but I found that when I pulled tight [pulled the body away from the pole and kept the thongs taut] I suffered less.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

"Just before the sun went down that day, all at once I felt something touching me on my left side. It was Running Crow and the other man who stopped me. This meant that my fasting and chastizing myself were about over.

"They took off those thongs and told me to lie down in the same position that they had told me to lie in at the beginning. That is when I suffered the most. They did not take the sticks out, but just cut those thongs off and it seemed to me as if they were cutting my heart. Those fellows took those pieces that my skin was still clinging to and buried them at the foot of the post. And that is my experience. They told me to put on my clothes and I did so. I did not experience or perceive anything out of the ordinary. I just suffered. That is all.

"After I put on my clothes I found out that the skin of my feet was worn off and blistered and sore, and they sure hurt me. And to add to my aches, on the soles of my feet I was awfully sore the next morning and couldn't walk. And that is the end of my experience."

Sweat-Bath

In Gros Ventre ritual, sweating and sacrificing were quite closely associated. Invitations to sweat extended to the Supreme Being and other beings in certain sweat-lodge rites,[11] such as those connected with the Flat and Feathered Pipe ceremonies, were of the nature of gifts or offerings, and hence sacrifices in the broader sense of the term. Then, too, the sweat-lodge and sweat-bath were a chosen medium for making offerings or consummating the sacrificial rite: the pole erected in front of the sweat-lodge and the buffalo skull on the adjacent mound were intended particularly for the attachment to and disposition of respectively sacrificial objects,—offerings of robes, bits of flesh, and so forth. Furthermore, the sweat-lodge was a preferred place in which to make sacrifices of flesh and of finger joints.

On other occasions too sweat-lodge and sacrifice went together. For instance, a man whose son had been killed by the enemy might

[11] Kroeber, 1908, pp. 274-75, gives an account of sweating and mentions that "Above-white-man" was called first.